

BEST COPY

AVAILABLE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA

*Records 11/11/70
Statistics & Standards Section
seen by JKH
initiated 8/8/10
initiated 2/8/67*

STAT



This is in reply to your letter of July 14 in which you have asked several questions concerning the records of the various Federal Censuses of the Population maintained at this location.

We have microfilm records of the Population Censuses from 1880 through 1950, with the exception of the 1890 Census. The microfilm records of these Censuses consist of approximately 21,000 rolls of microfilm. It requires 27 file cabinets to contain the information pertaining to approximately 100,000,000 people. In order to search for a name on the microfilm, you must be furnished with an exact address as the names are arranged alphabetically in the order in which the census enumerator visited the various households within pre-determined areas.

The entire Population Censuses have been indexed for the 1900 and 1920 Censuses. The 1880 Census has been indexed for families having children under ten years of age at the time of that Census. In the middle nineteen thirties, 4 x 6 inch cards were prepared for each household and the Soundex System was used to code the surname of the head of each household. The file cabinets are arranged alphabetically by States and contain 19,000 cubic feet of records. Usually the only data needed to perform a search in the soundex records are the applicant's name, the name of the head of the household with whom he lived, and the city and county or State in which he was living at the time of the census.

For internal control of the application forms, we type the name and address of the applicant on a 3 x 5 inch card. The surname on each card is coded in Soundex and within the code, given names are filed alphabetically. The typing of 350 of these cards by one typist in an eight-hour day is considered satisfactory. One clerk attains satisfactory performance when he files 800 cards in the course of one day.

We do not use punch cards or any special filing equipment.

Page 2

STAT

July 29, 1959

The enclosed application form and census release contain information relating to our searching service. If you have the occasion to be in Pittsburg, Kansas, we would be happy to show you how this searching operation functions.

Sincerely yours,

Roy D. Musselman
Acting Chief, Personal Census Service Branch

Enclosures